

PROGRAM IN JEWISH STUDIES

ANNUAL NEWSLETTER

STUDENTS • ALUMNI • FACULTY • EVENTS



Program in Jewish Studies
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO BOULDER

MESSAGE FROM PROFESSOR ELIAS SACKS

DIRECTOR



Earlier this year, I marked the beginning of the fall semester by writing that in the Program in Jewish Studies at the University of Colorado Boulder, we strive to be more than just another academic unit. We also seek to be a genuine community—a space where individuals from diverse backgrounds can come together to think, learn, and grow.

As 2020 comes to a close, I'm mindful, more than ever, of the importance of creating this type of community. The past year has been a challenging one. Students, faculty, staff, and members of the broader public have adjusted to new modes of learning necessitated by COVID-19. CU Boulder, the state of Colorado, and the United States as a whole have experienced one of the most fraught political periods in recent memory. And most painfully, a beloved member of our own community, Professor David Shneer, passed away in November after a long battle with cancer.

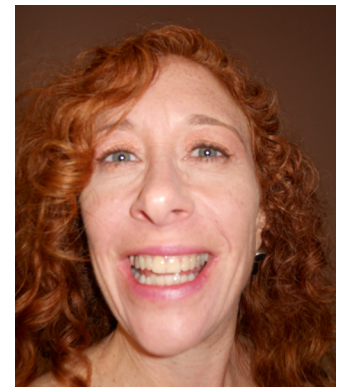
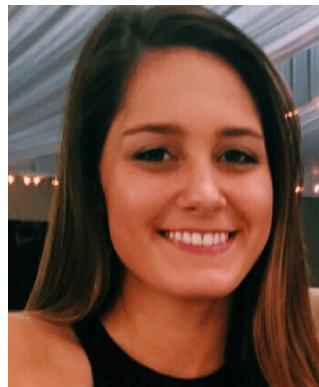
Amid all of this, however, I have been awed and humbled by the strength, compassion, and creativity of our community. Faculty and students have come together in courses on topics from the Hebrew Bible to the history of Israel/Palestine to religion and reproductive politics in the United States. Individuals and civic organizations across Colorado and beyond have come together for programs such as our Peak to Peak webinars and Israel/Palestine series. Passionate community supporters including Katherine and John Rosenbloom, Larry Cohn, and many others have come together to establish our new Fund for Innovation and Excellence in Jewish Studies. And scholars, activists, and members of the public from across the globe have come together to remember David and honor his legacy.

None of us expected the past year to look like this, but I am confident that we, as a Jewish Studies community, will continue to be there for one another. I am so very grateful to each and every one of you, and my (virtual) door is always open.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elias Sacks'.

CONGRATULATIONS TO VANESSA FRYE & WELCOME TO LINDA PARK

The Program in Jewish Studies wishes a fond farewell and congratulations to **Vanessa Frye**, our outgoing Communications & Project Administrator. Earlier this spring, she left her position to focus on pursuing her Master's degree in Strategic Communication Design at CU Boulder, graduating in August 2020. Vanessa had been a member of the Jewish Studies staff since 2016 and is very thankful for her time with the Program in Jewish Studies. One of her favorite aspects of being part of Jewish Studies was the welcoming community she came to know over the years.



We also want to welcome **Linda Park**, who has completed her first year as Jewish Studies Program Manager. She joined our community in August 2019, bringing over seven years of higher education administration experience at Princeton University and an additional seven years of nonprofit management experience at several synagogues. Linda enjoys meeting students and community members at Jewish Studies events. She is an avid cross-country skier, prolific nature photographer, and mother of two adult daughters.



TRIBUTE TO PROFESSOR DAVID SHNEER Z”L



On November 4, 2020, a beloved member of our Jewish Studies community, Professor David Shneer, passed away after a long battle with cancer. David joined the University of Colorado Boulder faculty in 2008, serving as Director of the Program in Jewish Studies from 2008-2015 and Chair of the Department of Religious Studies from 2016-2019. He held the Louis P. Singer Chair in Jewish History.

David was a transformational figure. Within CU, he oversaw the launch of a major and two minors in Jewish Studies, the establishment of the Post-Holocaust American Judaism Collections, and the creation of North America's first endowed chair in Israel/Palestine Studies. He authored and edited numerous books, including (among others) *Queer Jews* (2002), *Yiddish and the Creation of Soviet Jewish Culture* (2004), *Torah Queeries: Weekly Commentaries on the Hebrew Bible* (2009), *Through Soviet Jewish Eyes: Photography, War, and the Holocaust* (2011), and *Grief: The Biography of a Holocaust Photograph* (2020)—books that reshaped our understanding of the Jewish past and Jewish present and received

accolades across diverse fields. He co-edited the journal *East European Jewish Affairs* and empowered emerging voices, working with students who have gone on to study and teach across the world. And he reimagined the nature of scholarship and scholarly life, curating museum and gallery exhibits, establishing Archive Transformed: The CU Boulder Artist/Scholar Collaborative Residency, and working tirelessly to promote inclusivity and diversity at CU, the Association for Jewish Studies, and beyond.

Since David passed away, we have received numerous tributes to him. Colleagues at CU have expressed their abiding gratitude for how he supported their own work and the work of their departments. Jewish Studies faculty from across the world have described how much they learned from David's scholarship, and how much they treasured his presence at academic gatherings. Students have recounted how David inspired not only their intellectual pursuits, but also their commitment to engaged citizenship and activism. Members of the public have shared stories about studying with David in synagogues, lecture halls, and other settings—and about how his energy, passion, and unabashed joy left an indelible impression.

This outpouring is a testament to who David was. In an academic world that often prizes solitary study, David lived a life committed to relationship-building. His scholarship, teaching, and activism were animated not only by his love of learning, but also by his belief that the most important forms of learning involve connections with others. For David, intellectual activity was, fundamentally, a communal endeavor, and the communities he helped create have been transformative for those of us fortunate enough to participate in them.

This August, we hosted a webinar celebrating the publication of David's newest book, *Grief: The Biography of a Holocaust Photograph*. In his closing remarks, David reflected on what it means for a community to mourn and honor a beloved member. As we come to grips with his loss, we know that David's memory will live on, inspiring us—as he did during his life—to build new connections, take up new conversations, and leave the world better than we found it.

To learn more about David's life, you can visit his website, davidshneer.com. To learn more about ways to honor his memory, you can contact us at cujewishstudies@colorado.edu.



SPRING 2021 EVENTS

Webinars are free and open to the public. To register and view recordings of past events, visit colorado.edu/jewishstudies/events.



JANUARY 27

“No N***, No Jews, No Dogs”: The Holocaust as “Racial Projects” or in the “White-Racial Frame”**

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM | Wednesday, January 27, 2021 | Professor Willa Johnson, Associate Professor of Sociology, University of Mississippi | Zoom Webinar



MARCH 18

2021 Sondra & Howard Bender Visiting Scholar

Judaism and the Black Experience

7:00 PM - 8:00 PM | Thursday, March 18, 2021 | Professor Bruce Haynes, Professor of Sociology, University of California, Davis | Zoom Webinar

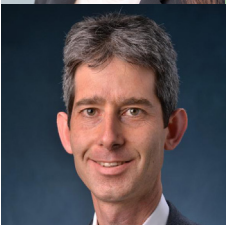
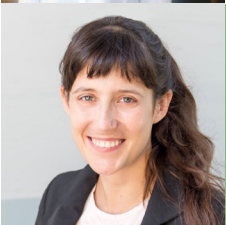
STAY TUNED FOR MORE 2021 EVENT DETAILS

Then and Now: Genocide, Courage, and Complicity

Week of April 5, 2021 | In Partnership with CU Anschutz's Center for Bioethics and Humanities

Annual CU-DU Week of Jewish Philosophy

April 2021 | In Partnership with DU's Center for Judaic Studies



PEAK TO PEAK SERIES

From food and social justice to Holocaust memory and American history, the University of Colorado Boulder Peak to Peak series brings CU Boulder scholars into conversation with audiences and communities across Colorado and beyond. Exploring influential historical figures and events and enduring human questions, these online learning opportunities are offered through the CU Boulder Program in Jewish Studies in partnership with the Office for Outreach and Engagement Arts and Humanities Initiative and communities and organizations across Colorado: Corazón de Trinidad Creative District, Durango Creative District, Garfield Public Library District, Trinidad Carnegie Public Library, Western Colorado University, Aspen Jewish Congregation, Boulder JCC, Kavod on the Road, and Temple Aaron in Trinidad.

For more details about Spring and Summer 2021 Peak to Peak programs and to view recordings of past webinars, visit colorado.edu/jewishstudies/peak-peak.

Eco-Kashrut: Food, Jews, and Justice

Thursday, July 23, 2020 | Professor Samira Mehta

Grief: The Biography of a Holocaust Photograph

Thursday, August 20, 2020 | Professor David Shneer z"l

Jewish Messianic Heresy and the Right to Privacy

Monday, September 14, 2020 | Professor Nan Goodman

Exams in Extremis: Standardized Testing, Politics, and Crisis in the Middle East

Thursday, November 19, 2020 | Professor Hilary Falb Kalisman

Klezmer Music as Jewish Dialogue and Jewish Discourse

Monday, December 14, 2020 | Professor Yonatan Malin

PLAGUE AND QUARANTINE: PAST AND PRESENT

ISRAEL/PALESTINE WEBINAR SERIES



Under Quarantine: Immigrants and Disease at Israel's Gate

Thursday, October 22, 2020 | Rhona Seidelman, Schusterman Chair of Israel Studies & Assistant Professor of History, University of Oklahoma



"The End of the Tunnel is Dark": Reflections on the Covid-19 Pandemic Under Occupation

Tuesday, October 27, 2020 | Weeam Hammoudeh, Assistant Professor, Institute of Community and Public Health, Birzeit University



FACULTY & STAFF UPDATES

The Program in Jewish Studies is proud of its award-winning, interdisciplinary faculty. The Program also has dedicated and accomplished staff members who work to expand Jewish Studies' presence at CU and in the community.

Samuel Boyd's first book, *Language Contact, Colonial Administration, and the Construction of Identity in Ancient Israel*, will be published as part of the Harvard Semitic Monographs series in April 2021. **Brian Catlos's** recent book, *Kingdoms of Faith: A New History of Islamic Spain*, came out in Complex Chinese translation, and a new textbook he is co-writing, *The Sea in the Middle: The Mediterranean World, 650-1650*, is in production. **Nan Goodman** served as the Kingdon Fellow at the University of Wisconsin Madison's Institute for Research in the Humanities. She is also the Editor in Chief for *English Language Notes*. **Yonatan Malin** is working on a book entitled *Vessels of Song: Analytical and Interpretive Essays on Klezmer*

Music, and presented public lectures for CU on the Weekend and the Jewish Studies Peak to Peak series.

Samira Mehta signed a contract with Beacon Press for a collection of personal essays entitled *The Racism of People Who Love You*. She was awarded the Cashmere Subvention Award in Jewish Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies from Association for Jewish Studies Women's Caucus. **Linda Park** gave a talk for Arts and Humanities program managers on financial planning and budgeting. She was also featured in the *CU Boulder Arts and Science Magazine* for the City of Boulder Creative Neighborhood COVID-19 fairy garden art project. **Eyal Rivlin** presented at George Washington University on his work developing nonbinary Hebrew. He serves the larger community by leading High Holiday and Shabbat services at Nevei Kodesh. **Elias Sacks** has articles forthcoming in journals such as the *Harvard Theological Review* and *Rosenzweig Jahrbuch*, and delivered talks at institutions including the University of Virginia and Colby College. **Rebecca Wartell** presented at the American Historical Association and Boulder's Congregation Bonai Shalom. She also published a book review on *H-Net* and participated in two CU Boulder faculty panel discussions. **Beverly Weber** published a co-authored book, *Precarious Intimacies: The Politics of Touch in Contemporary Western European Cinema*, as well as several articles and chapters on refugee migration.

MEET PROFESSOR HILARY FALB KALISMAN

Hilary Falb Kalisman is an Assistant Professor of History and Endowed Professor of Israel/Palestine Studies in the Program in Jewish Studies at CU Boulder. Her research interests include education, colonialism, and state and nation-building in Israel/Palestine as well as in the broader Middle East. Her teaching focuses on Jewish and Middle Eastern history, with specializations in the history of Israel/Palestine, as well as the history of childhood.

Professor Kalisman is currently working on a history of standardized testing in the Israel/Palestine region. After receiving an American Council of Learned Societies Fellowship and a National Academy of Education/Spencer Fellowship to start this project, she presented some of her early research in her recent Peak to Peak talk, "Exams in Extremis: Standardized Testing, Politics, and Crisis in the Middle East." This fall, she organized a webinar series entitled "Plague and Quarantine: Past and Present," in which scholars explored the history of quarantine in Israel, as well as the current trajectory of COVID-19 in the Occupied Territories. Her courses, particularly "The Arab/Israeli Conflict" and "Modern Childhood in Israel/Palestine," also allow her to help students learn about the region from multiple perspectives. "I've been so impressed with my students here," Professor Kalisman says. "Even living in a political climate characterized by incivility, and dealing with controversial subjects, not to mention a global pandemic, students have been thoughtful, open to new ideas, respectful, and engaged with course materials."



Learn more about Professor Hilary Falb Kalisman:
colorado.edu/jewishstudies/faculty



FUND FOR INNOVATION AND EXCELLENCE

Last winter, the Program in Jewish Studies announced a generous lead legacy gift of \$550,000 from Katherine and John Rosenbloom to establish the Fund for Innovation and Excellence in Jewish Studies, which will help secure the Program's future by supporting student success, public programming, and cutting-edge work by faculty and staff. We also announced a second substantial legacy gift by Larry Cohn, along with a generous offer by Katherine and John to match up to \$12,500 in donations to the Fund through September 30, 2020. We're pleased to announce that, thanks to the generosity of numerous supporters, we have exceeded the \$12,500 matching goal, with the result that as of January 1, 2021, the Fund for Innovation and Excellence will be fully endowed. We're so very grateful to Katherine, John, Larry, and the many members of our community who

have contributed to this initiative. It's a tremendous privilege to work with individuals of such passion, vision, and integrity as we reimagine what it means to produce new knowledge and prepare students of all backgrounds, Jewish and non-Jewish, for the opportunities and challenges of the twenty-first century.

CONGRATULATIONS, CLASS OF 2020!

On May 15, the Program in Jewish Studies held its first-ever online graduation program honoring seven remarkable University of Colorado Boulder students receiving undergraduate degrees and graduate certificates in Jewish Studies. Close to one hundred family, friends, faculty, and members of the broader community came together on Zoom to hear from these students and celebrate all that they have achieved during their time at CU:

MINOR IN JEWISH STUDIES

Bailey Hoolihan

BA in History, Minor in Jewish Studies

David Ruin

BA in Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, Minor in Jewish Studies, Minor in Russian Studies

MINOR IN HEBREW & ISRAEL STUDIES

Adam Marcus Austin

BS in Computer Science, Minor in Hebrew & Israel Studies

Abigail Mendel

BA in Psychology, Minor in Hebrew & Israel Studies, Minor in Leadership Studies, and Certificate in Peace, Conflict, and Security Studies

GRADUATE CERTIFICATE IN JEWISH STUDIES

Gregg Joseph Drinkwater

PhD in History, Graduate Certificate in Jewish Studies

Jacob Allen Flaws

PhD in History, Graduate Certificate in Jewish Studies

Adi Nester

PhD in German Studies, Graduate Certificate in Jewish Studies

GRADUATE ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

The Program in Jewish Studies would like to congratulate a number of recent graduates on their teaching positions across the United States. **Gregg Drinkwater** is a lecturer in History and Jewish Studies at CU Boulder, and in Spring 2021 will serve as the Norman and Syril Reitman Visiting Scholar at the Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life at Rutgers University in New Jersey. **Jacob Flaws** is a lecturer in History and Jewish Studies at CU Boulder, teaching courses on Jewish history, Holocaust and genocide, and a variety of other topics. **Adi Nester** began a new position as Assistant Professor of German and Jewish Studies at the University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill. **Nick Underwood**, who received his PhD from CU Boulder in 2016, began a new position as Assistant Professor of History and Chair of Judaic Studies at the College of Idaho.



Program in Jewish Studies

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO **BOULDER**

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YOUR GIFT MAKES A DIFFERENCE

Alumni, donors, friends and community supporters bring the Program in Jewish Studies to life! Because of your commitment to PJS, we are able to provide students with the critical thinking and communication skills they need to navigate a diverse world and become leaders in their communities. Your gifts also help foster community education, support faculty research and staff professional development, and cultivate archival resources.

Thank you for your commitment to expanding the boundaries of academic learning.

Please support Jewish Studies by making a donation through the enclosed envelope or online at:
colorado.edu/jewishstudies/giving

COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD

The Program in Jewish Studies Advisory Board is comprised of strong supporters of Jewish Studies. The mission of the board is to help the Program obtain resources for maintenance and growth, enhance the Program's reputation within CU and beyond, and help the Program facilitate community engagement and development within Colorado. We are grateful for the board's dedicated work to expand the reach of Jewish Studies on campus and in the wider community. Thank you for all you do.

Barry Baer, *Chair*
Rachel Amaru
Larry Cohn
Jim Edelman
Sandy Friedman

Alan Greenberg
Peter Ornstein
John Rosenbloom
Katherine Rosenbloom
Douglas Sparks

Kristin White
Jack Zable
Elias Sacks, *Director*
Michelle Gaffga, *Advancement*